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Seven highly effective habits for holiday food safety

Alice Henneman
Extension Educator

They’re everywhere. They’re on your hands, on the kitchen counter, in the air. They’re the bacteria and other organisms that can cause food-borne illness.

HABIT 1: HOT OR COLD IS HOW TO HOLD

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid the “Danger Zone” between 40 and 140 degrees F. Food-borne bacteria multiply rapidly in this “zone,” doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. Take perishable foods, such as meat, poultry and seafood products, home immediately after purchase. Place them in the refrigerator (40 degrees F or below) or freezer (0 degrees F) upon arrival. Buy a refrigerator/freezer thermometer at a variety, hardware, grocery or department store. Monitor temperatures on a regular basis.

Use a refrigerator thermometer to assure a temperature of 40 F or lower.

Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. This is especially important when handling raw meat, poultry or seafood products. Bacteria can be spread all over your kitchen just by not washing your hands properly.

HABIT 2: DON’T BE A CONTAMINATE

When holding hot foods, keep them at an internal temperature of 140 degrees F or higher. At events such as buffets or buffets, serve smaller bowls of food and set out fresh food bowls as needed. For added safety, put foods on ice or over a heat source to keep them out of the temperature “Danger Zone.” Replace with a plate of fresh food, rather than adding food to other food already on a plate.

Use a refrigerator thermometer to assure a temperature of 40 F or lower.

Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. This is especially important when handling raw meat, poultry or seafood products. Bacteria can be spread all over your kitchen just by not washing your hands properly.

HABIT 3: WATCH THAT PLATE, DON’T CROSS-CONTAMINATE

“Cross contamination” occurs when bacteria transfer from one food to another through a shared surface. Don’t let juices from raw meat, poultry or seafood come in contact with already cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw.

For example, when grilling, avoid putting cooked meat on the plate that held the raw meat. After cutting a raw chicken, clean the cutting board with hot, soapy water. Follow with hot rinse water before cutting greens for a salad.

Place packages of raw meat, poultry or fish on plates on lower shelves of refrigerators to prevent their juices from dripping on other foods.

HABIT 4: MAKE IT A LAW - USE THE FRIDGE TO THAW

Never thaw (or marinate) meat, poultry or seafood on the kitchen counter. It is best to plan ahead for slow, safe thawing in the refrigerator. Small items may thaw overnight. Larger foods may take longer—allow approximately one day for every five pounds of weight.

Lancaster County Extension Educator receives national awards

Lancaster County Extension Educator Alice Henneman received two national awards from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences at the October 1997 Galaxy Summit Conference in Cincinnati. Henneman was recognized for creating FoodTalk, a free monthly e-mail newsletter, Don’t Get Bugged by a Foodborne Illness food safety game. FoodTalk, a free monthly e-mail newsletter, provides practical, concise information on nutrition and food safety to consumers, educators and health professionals. Offered through the Internet, it has attained subscribers in over 50 countries. To subscribe to FoodTalk, e-mail Henneman at: cnty5025@unlvm.unl.edu

Don’t Get Bugged by a Foodborne Illness uses a game to teach people from ages 12 and up recommended food safety practices. Don’t Get Bugged has been used for food safety training at school, work and community sites. Over 1,200 copies of this educational game have been sold in all 50 states plus Canada and Australia since it was developed fall, 1996. For more information about using this activity with your group, call 441-7180.
Hints for fruit storage

Proper storage conditions are needed for fruits that are not consumed immediately after harvest. The key to good storage is controlling the temperature and relative humidity of the storage area. For fruits such as apples, grapes and pears, store them in cool temperatures at 32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit and moist conditions at 90 to 95 percent relative humidity. Other fruits should be stored at room temperature for storage that has smooth indoor surfaces. Baskets, melon crates or boxes are suitable. Line these containers with aluminum foil to help retain moisture. Keep fruits away from direct sunlight, the heat from ovens or the air from heating vents.叶子 will likely last through the fall and winter, if stored properly. Apple varieties should be harvested firm and ripe to insure the longest storage period.

Harvest pears when they are full sized but still green and hard. Pears ripen quickly at 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Grapes will usually keep for one or two months. Grapes should be stored alone because they pick up odors from other fruits and vegetables. (DJ)

Rodent damage

Girdling—gnawing a strip of bark completely around a tree trunk—kills the tree by starving it to death. Mice may often be discouraged from feeding on tree bark by removing the mulch or grass growing around the plant. This destroys the protective covering over which the mice normally feed. Severe mouse infestations can be controlled by creating a barrier with 1/4” hardware cloth set 3 to 4” deep in the ground and 10” above ground level. If the barrier is extended to reach about 2’ above normal snow level, it will also prevent rabbit nibbling. Rodent repellents and trapping may also be used for rodent control. Many of these chemicals have an unpleasant taste that discourages feeding on the bark. A new coat must be applied each fall and after heavy rains or wet snows. (DJ)

Houseplants from seed

Starting house plants from seed isn’t any different from starting “garden” plants. Many house plants are just tropical or desert plants which tolerate low light. There are also several “garden” plants which thrive quite well inside. Sow the seeds based on the instructions on the seed packet. Use a sterile soil mixture or premixed soil starter media. Provide ample light and moisture as well as correct temperature and you will have very little problems with your seeds. Most seeds sown as house plants can be started at any time of the year, but you will get best germination results when you start them during the spring. Germination results when you start during the spring. The effect of the natural lengthening of the day aids the germination process.

Some common house plants can be purchased as seeds from catalogs, among many cacti and cactus mixes, Hypoestes, African violets, aralia, schefflera and Bird of Paradise. These tropical plants, for the most part, are evergreens and will live for many years. Those plants which are often grown as garden plants, but which do very well as house plants, too, are impatiens, coleus, geranium, Thunbergia and begonias. Many of these are annual plants which will eventually fade. The coleus, impatiens and Thunbergia are examples of house plants which will not live for much more than a year. Good care and periodic pruning will help to extend the life span of these garden house plants. Seeds for these plants can be purchased through garden catalogs and on seed packet racks in local garden centers. (DJ)

Plants have many roles

Plants do a lot for people. They clean the atmosphere, modify climate, reduce noise, inhibit glare and control erosion. Third, hairy leaves and stems of many plants trap airborne particles and hold them until they are washed to the ground by rain. In one large study, the dust count on the down-wind side of a heavily planted area measured 75 percent lower than a similar count on the up-wind side. Fourth, trees can slow the air movement sufficiently for heavier smoke to be trapped near the ground and less air pollution escapes to the atmosphere. Habitats where children, pets, wildlife and people live need to be safe from human and animal predators. The word “hardy” chrysanthemum has been used since these should survive from year to year. However, mums from a florist shop that are set out in the landscape may not make it through the winter, since florist mums are often tender varieties. (MIM)

Pesticide storage

As the need for lawn and garden chemicals declines in the fall, the question of what to do with the leftovers arises. Storing chemicals where they won’t pose a safety hazard is the first concern; keeping them in usable condition for next year is the second. Pesticides— insecticides, weed killers, fungicides, etc., are poisonous and should be treated with caution. Any toxic chemical should always be stored in a locked storage area, where children, pets, wildlife and irresponsible adults can’t get to it. So there’s no question about what’s in a container or how to use it, pesticides and other chemicals should always be stored in their original containers with the labels intact.

To replace lost or unreadable labels, contact the dealer who sold you the chemical. Never store pesticides or other chemicals with or near food, feed, medicine or cleaning supplies so there’s no chance of a mix-up. Use pesticides and other chemicals where they won’t be subject to very high temperatures—above 90 degrees Fahrenheit— or very low temperatures. High temperatures may cause chemical changes that will make pesticides less effective. Freezing will ruin liquid formulations and may break glass containers.

The storage area should be dry, also, so that wettable powders, granulated pesticides and dry fertilizers don’t draw moisture from the air and become caked. Enclose paper bags and boxes of powders and granules in plastic bags to protect them against dampness and moisture.

The best way to dispose of excess pesticides is to use them as directed on the label. Never dispose of a pesticide or other chemical by pouring it down the drain, on the ground, into a storm sewer or into a body of water. The danger to other living things—humans, pets, wildlife and the environment is too great. (DJ)

Timely care of hardy chrysanthemums

Hardy mums may well be the best known fall flowering perennial. Two questions often asked now about mums are what needs to be done to the mums now and what can be done to insure their winter survival.

The quality of the mum plants in the fall as well as the quantity of the flowers depends on the care given to them during the summer. Fertilizing mums with a soluble fertilizer is usually helpful in the fall until the flowers show color. Watering during the growing season is also important, especially during drought periods.

As soon as the flowers are killed by a hard freeze, the blooms should be cut off. This can be done quickly with hedge shears. However, it is important to be tempted to cut down the mum stems with leaves as long as the foliage remains green and normal looking. Like all perennials, the leaves produce food which can be stored in the roots.

After the leaves turn brown, the stems can be cut down to about two inches above the ground.

Two factors important to encourage survival include good soil drainage and adequate winter mulch over the mums at the proper time. This assumes you have already entered the fall in good, healthy condition in order for them to survive.

Winter mulching has two critical components. Do not apply mulch over the mums or other perennials until the soil has been chilled after several frosts and the ground is to be a 1-3 inch layer of shredded leaves, clean straw or pine needles. If this mulch is applied while the soil is still fairly warm, the roots may not reach the cold soil before winter injury can occur. The word “hardy” chrysanthemum has been used since these should survive from year to year. However, mums from a florist shop that are set out in the landscape may not make it through the winter, since florist mums are often tender varieties. (MIM)

Forcing bulbs

There is still time through early December to plant spring flowering bulbs for forcing. Very important when purchasing bulbs for flowering is choosing cultivars of bulbs that are adapted to forcing. Cultivars of bulbs are available for forcing enthusiasts. Bulbs need only a limited nutrient supply during the forcing process. Do not add manures and additional nutrients to the soil at planting time.

Forcing bulbs. Do not add manures and additional nutrients to the soil at planting time. Plant 5 to 6 bulbs per 5-inch bulb pot. In forcing, the flat side of the bulb should face in the direction of the light. The word “hardy” chrysanthemum has been used since these should survive from year to year. However, mums from a florist shop that are set out in the landscape may not make it through the winter, since florist mums are often tender varieties. (MIM)
Squirrels are busy preparing for cold winter days ahead

Squirrels are special animals. They are among only a few animals that have truly learned to co-exist with humans. The typical red squirrel survives in urban settings on natural food, but it also takes advantage of handouts from bird and squirrel feeders and also helps itself to your garden produce. Squirrels build nests in trees, but they also may take up residence in attics, garages and other man-made shelters. For some people, squirrels are a pest that waste birdseed and dig holes in the lawn. Others love to feed squirrels as much as they do birds and delight in their antics.

Food. The favorite diet of squirrels consists of nuts, seeds and fruits. During the summer and fall, squirrels provision their territory by burying nuts and seeds in the ground, often in the lawn and flower beds. Before they bury a nut, a squirrel breaks the shell of a nut with its teeth, then rubs the nut on its face. This seemingly nonsensical behavior is a scent from the nut which helps the squirrel find it later—under a foot of snow. Even in the winter, the average adult squirrel needs to eat about a pound of food a week to maintain an active life. In the early spring, after they have eaten their stockpile of food and when they have babies to feed, squirrels can damage landscape plants before there is other food for them to eat. Oddly enough, some squirrels have developed a fondness for the coating on automobile electrical wires; some of the newer wiring has coating made from soybean meal.

Shelter. Squirrels build nests called dreys, made of twigs and leaves and may build a nest in a hollow tree cavity. The interior is lined with fur or other soft material for comfort. Nests are built between two strong branches high enough above the ground to deter predators but not too high or the nest will be destroyed by wind. Squirrels may build nests in an attic or a crawl space, but they have also built nests in car chimneys, barbecue grills and under porches.

During the winter, squirrels are most active a few hours after sunrise and before sunset. In the winter, squirrels are normally most active between dusk and mid-day and will spend the rest of the day in the nest. During winter storms or a severe cold, the squirrels may not leave the nest for days. But, tree squirrels do not hibernate. Adult tree squirrels live alone, but one may temporarily share its nest with other squirrels to conserve body heat. After the cold weather subsides, the other squirrels will go on their way. In the late winter and early spring, squirrels mate and the female gives birth to her babies—four or five at a time. The male squirrel plays no part in the rearing process.

One way to live more peaceably with squirrels is to provide food and shelter for them. A squirrel feeder can be as much entertainment as a bird feeder. Squirrels are amazing to watch; they are natural acrobats and they can jump great distances without falling. If squirrels live in your area, consider making a squirrel feeder. Squirrels will appreciate a place to raise their young. This may keep them out of your attic. (BPO)

The big sleep

Arlene Hanna
Extension Assistant

Winter is on its way, and for many animals, it’s going to be tough to find food and stay warm during the cold winter months. What will they do? They won’t sleep it— they’ll sleep through it! Lots of animals spend anywhere from a few weeks to several months in a sleep called hibernation. During hibernation, an animal’s temperature and heart rate drop, and breathing slows almost to a standstill. That way, it uses much less energy than it normally would. When the weather gets warmer, the animal wakes up and is ready for some summer fun!

Garter snakes don’t like to be alone during their long winter nap. The solution to this is that hundreds—even thousands—often hibernate together in one huge, spaghetti-like clamp. The body heat of all these snakes helps keep the group warm.

Ever wonder why you never see ladybugs during the winter? They’re hibernating! Large groups of ladybugs doze together, curled into a tree hole or other protected burrow. Houseflies and mosquitos also hibernate during winter. Frogs, lizards and snakes depend on the weather to let them know when to hibernate. Since these animals are cold-blooded, their body temperatures are controlled by the temperature of their environment. As the temperatures drop, frogs, lizards and snakes become more inactive. When the temperature gets low enough, they begin to hibernate, often under stones or buried in mud. They keep on snoozing until warm weather wakes them up in the spring.

What do butterflies do? Not all of them hibernate because some head for warmer winter homes while others spend the winter as a cast of characters in a cocoon. The adults that tough it out do their hibernating in caves, trees or other shelters. How deep the sleeping keeps them from freezing to death? As the amount of daylight gets shorter, the butterfly’s blood produces chemicals called glycols. Glycols work like a car’s antifreeze—they keep the butterfly’s blood from freezing. Come springtime, the glycols dissolve, and the butterfly’s blood returns to normal. Most birds deal with winter the same way as people do—they fly off to a warmer climate! Those that stick around can tough it out during cold weather as cold as minus 30 degrees F, as long as they can find food. For information about how and what to feed these friendly birds, call 441-7180. (AIL)

Building with recycled materials same a loud business practice

Steel cans, newspapers and scrap wood become structural framing, insulation and flooring in a growing trend toward “green” construction and materials. Many architects and engineers, architects and builders have adopted a green or sustainable building ethic for resource efficiency and productivity. Architects and builders may be using recycled products, such as gypsom wallboard and ceiling tile, without being aware of it. Recycled content isn’t always promoted because past industry perception of recycled quality and price hasn’t been positive. That perception is changing. The focus is growing toward environmental building responsibility. Many of these products are being developed daily. Many of these products are reported to be as recycled content isn’t always promoted because past industry perception of recycled quality and price hasn’t been positive. That perception is changing. The focus is growing toward environmental building responsibility. Many of these products are being developed daily. Many of these products are reported to be as

America unbugged: fast facts about bug fears and fascinations

Orkin Pest Control Summer Survey Results:

Man crush vs. Bug

Women surveyed are twice as likely as men to be “grossed-out” by bugs (55% vs. 23%). Women surveyed are more likely than men to consider a bug in the house a “man’s job” (34% vs. 24%).
Introducing Beef Basics IV

Several beef producers from this area have completed one or more of the beef management home study courses last year through Lancaster County Cooperative Extension. All three of these courses will be offered again this year. The fourth course “Beef as a Business” has been added for those wishing to continue this method of self education. These courses allow you to sharpen your cow/calf management knowledge within the comfort of your own home or office. Your involvement will be encouraged through answering questions on the lesson quizzes which are to be returned to the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Office when completed for evaluation and assistance.

Over 3000 beef producers across the state have participated in Beef Basics Courses during the past four years. These producers estimate that they save over $15 per cow using the management and production ideas presented in these home study courses. Beef Basics Courses give you the tools to build a stronger bottom line for improving profitability in your operation.

Understanding livestock behavior improves production

Improving livestock production may mean spending quality time with the animals in their home. Stressful situations may tend to be less cooperative, eat less and have difficulty mating.

Producers often let livestock get used to their presence in the corral or pen. Allowing animals a chance to smell, see, taste, hear and touch their handler makes them more comfortable and at ease. The goal is to have the animals treat their knowledge of the handler and then go about their business.

Recognizing livestock behavioral signals and what they mean is important. Pay attention to the animals—what bothers them and what doesn’t. Most animals will make a different sound when calling for their young than when hungry or frightened. Knowing the difference can help avoid injury.

Ten animal behavioral traits are reproductive, maternal, communicative, social, feeding, eliminative, shelter-seeking, investigative, allelomimetic (habitual pattern) and maladaptive. Understanding these traits can help a producer learn what kind of animal best fits the operation.

Drying corn requires good management

Natural air drying is an energy-efficient grain drying method that is particularly well suited to Nebraska weather conditions. A high-quality dried product, with little of the stress cracking or heat damage associated with high-temperature drying, is an added attraction. However, good management practices must be followed before safe, satisfactory drying results can be achieved.

• A major concern with this method is that drying air which is too wet to be dried without spoilage or deterioration, especially when the bin is filled with a cold corn, will cause free water. If the bin is filled, drying fans need to be operated so the corn can be de-watered using minimum energy.

• Maximum allowable corn moisture contents for natural air drying largely depend on the amount of airflow delivered by the drying fan. A minimum of 0.75 cubic feet per minute (cfm) per bushel is recommended; 1.25 cfms are highly suggested.

• Weather conditions affect both the drying rate and the rate of mold growth. Thus, maximum allowable moisture contents will vary with the harvest date as well as for different locations across the state.

Good management practices must be followed to achieve satisfactory drying results.

• Corn may be harvested and dried at higher moisture contents later in the fall when temperatures are cooler. Harvesting higher-moisture corn will require longer periods of fan operation. Drying performance is generally most satisfactory when corn at 20 to 22 percent moisture content is harvested around the middle of October.

• Drying times will vary depending on harvest date, corn moisture content, airflow rate and local weather conditions. Fan operations also affect the condition of the natural granary.

• It’s normal for drying times to vary from one year to the next. Don’t make the mistake of trying to cut drying costs, particularly during any operation during years with poor drying conditions.

These basic procedures work well with the wide range of air-drying situations. There is generally little advantage in trying to match the weather and turn the fans on and off accordingly.

Sources: Robert Grissom, Ph.D., assistant agricultural engineer, NU/IANR; David Jones and David Shelton, “Management to Maintain Stored Grain Quality (NebGuide G94-1199-A); Richard Pierce and Thomas Thompson, “Natural Air Corn Drying” (NebGuide GB5-760-A) (WS)

Reduce hay losses during storage

When you bring in your big round bales from the hay field to place in temporary storage for feeding your livestock this winter, be sure to store them with care. Nearly all hay stored outside will receive some amount of snow, wind and weather damage during the fall and winter months. However, there are some things that you can do to minimize the loss of valuable hay due to moisture accumulation around the bales.

The average round bale commonly loses about one fourth of its original feeding value when stored on the ground, but these losses can be greatly reduced with proper management. There may be ways to reduce spoilage this year if you take measures to store your hay a little differently.

For instance, if you push the twine sides of your bales against each other, or stack your bales, extra spoilage will almost certainly occur where these bales touch. Rain, ice, and snow gather in these spots instead of running off. Round bales butted end-to-end, cigar-like usually have less spoilage.

Snow that has drifted around your bales may also cause problems. Round bales in east-west rows often have drifts on the south side. Hay next to fence lines or trees can get more snow than bales stored out in the open. As snow melts, it soaks into the bales or makes the ground muddy. The north side never gets any sun so it’s dry. This year, line bales up north-and-south to get fewer drifts and to dry more quickly because the sun and our prevailing winds will hit both sides of the row.

Most important is the bottom of your bales. All puts bales on high-drainage sites so water runs away from the bales. If necessary, use crushed rock, railroad ties, or even pallets to keep the bottoms dry. This will also reduce problems getting to your hay or getting it moved due to snow drifts or mud.

Remember that just a little pre-planning can save tons of valuable hay and provide an optimum level of nutrients for your animals throughout the winter months.

Source: Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist (WS)

Control winter annual weeds in dormant alfalfa

Before winter sets in, take a close look at your alfalfa fields. There still may be time to do something about weeds that are not already frozen. Some alfalfa producers regularly have an abundance of yellow or white flowered weeds in first-cut alfalfa, like mustard and pennygrass. Or maybe you have downy brome or cheatgrass problems? These weeds are tiny right now, so you must look close to see them. But they are there in your alfalfa, and early next spring they could grow rapidly, reducing alfalfa yield, thinning stands, and lowering forage quality.

Unfortunately there is little a producer can do to control these weeds in their alfalfa stands without the application of herbicides. Help is available from several herbicides which are listed in the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Guide for Herbicide Use in Nebraska (EC 97-130-D). Herbicides recommended for control of winter annual weeds in stands over one year old, are listed in this Extension publication. They include: Karmex, Sinbar, Lexone, Sencor, Velpar Gramoxone and Roundup. All these chemicals help control winter annual weeds, but instructions must be followed exactly or damage will occur to the sensitive alfalfa plants. Also, they must be applied when alfalfa is in its dormant stage or crop injury will almost certainly occur. However, these chemicals need to be applied before soil freeze-up, so application is very tricky some years.

When weather conditions permit fall application, all of these herbicides are effective by all of these herbicides except for Karmax. While Karmax does not do a good job on downy brome, it is a good choice to control other winter weeds such as foxtail and pennycress. Karmax is effective by all of these herbicides except for Karmax. While Karmax does not do a good job on downy brome, it is a good choice to control other winter weeds such as foxtail, when alfalfa comes before soil freeze-up, so application is very tricky some years.

Home Study Courses offered this year include:

• Beef Basics I (nutrition, reproduction, diet, health and heritability)
• Beef Basics II (reproduction, genetics & breed selection)
• Beef Basics III (feeding & management of the pregnant cow)
• Beef Basics IV (beef as a business)

There are no prerequisites for enrollment in the courses.

The cost of each course is $45 social, feeding and adverse weather conditions.

Livestock should be treated wisely. Snowfall is as important as livestock people work and try to bond with their livestock.

Students often find that studying livestock behavior is educational, enjoyable and a way to improve working with livestock.

The end result is to have people and livestock working together in a holistic environment.

Source: Keith Gilster, Ph.D., livestock evaluation specialist, NU/IANR (WS)
Managing Soil Resources

Soils are one of the most valuable assets on an acreage. They are used as a foundation for roads and buildings, a receptacle and treatment medium for waste water and a growth medium for plants. The suitability of a particular soil for a given land use is a function of its depth, texture, structure, organic matter content and slope.

Soil depth
Soil depth is the thickness of soil from the surface to a root limiting layer such as bedrock or to a seasonal high water table. The degree of limitation associated with a given depth depends on the proposed use.

Soil texture
Soil texture describes the relative amount of sand, silt and clay in a given soil and influences many other soil properties including porosity, drainage, permeability, available water holding capacity and nutrient holding capacity. Depending on the amount of each, soils can be grouped into three broad textural classes; clayey, loamy or sandy. You can estimate soil texture by rubbing a small amount of moist soil between your thumb and index finger.

Soil structure
Soil structure describes the shape and size of soil aggregates and influences the size distribution of pores in soils. Approximately 50% of the total volume of a typical soil is pore space. These pores are either filled with water or air and the balance of air and water has a significant effect on plant growth. This balance is influenced by the relative size of the pores. Large pores are essential for drainage and coarse textured soils. The organic matter content of soils is generally highest in the upper part of the soil profile and decreases with depth. Soils with high organic matter contents are usually dark brown or black in color.

Soil organic matter
Soil organic matter is significantly influenced by management practices. Research has consistently shown that the best means of improving or restoring soil health and productivity is by proper and regular additions of organic materials. In addition, reducing the number of tillage operations will significantly improve soil health. Tillage destroys soil structure and reduces soil organic matter content.

Percent slope
Percent slope is the feet rise or fall on the landscape per 100 linear feet. While it is a feature of the landscape and not a soil property, it has a significant influence on soil formation and soil management. Runoff and soil erosion are severe problems on soils with slopes greater than 3 to 5 percent and would require management practices that would protect the soil surface and minimize runoff.

Most of this soil information can be found in modern soil surveys which are available for most Nebraska counties from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Conservation and Survey Division of the University of Nebraska. Keep in mind that soil properties can vary considerably over short distances. While soil maps are useful for determining the dominant types of soil on your acreage, a detailed evaluation of the soils may be necessary to determine its suitability for uses such as installation of a waste water treatment system. For more information about soils and soil management contact your local Extension Office, the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Conservation and Survey Division. (SCB)

HELP! Your input is needed.

In order to make the Acreage Section of the Nebl ine more responsive to your needs, we would like to know what articles or topics you would like to see in this section. We are also considering including a question and answer feature where we will try to find answers to your questions and print them in a future issue of the Nebl ine. Please send your comments, suggestions or questions to the Nebl ine Acreage Editor, Lancaster County Extension Office, 444 Cherry creek Rd., Lincoln, NE 68528-1507, or call 441-7180. Thanks for your help. (SCB)

Acreage Insights

How well do you know your soil?
1. Do you have a soil map for your acreage?
2. Do you know what texture your soil is?
3. Do you know how deep your soil is?
If you answered “no” to all these questions, read on.

Learn at your convenience
—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—

NUFACTS (audio) Information Center
NUFACTS audio message center offers fast, convenient information. In the Lincoln area call 441-7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web Site
Visit our Internet web site at: http://anrwww.unl.edu/lam/lanco/ag/acrea ge to learn about Extension programs, publications and links to other acreage and small farm information.

NUFACTS (faxback) Information Center
NUFACTS faxback document center offers fast, convenient information. In the Lincoln area call 441-7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 4-digit number of the document you wish to receive.

“Part-time Farming” video
“Part-time Farming” will help effectively develop your country environment and improve your quality of life. Just one hour of “Part-time Farming” provides numerous tips that will save you costly mistakes and precious time. Call 402-441-7180 to order your copy.
LMEF pathways program teams up with NEP NEP staff have become an important part of the Lincoln Medical Education Foundation Pathways to Self-Sufficiency through Education programs. The 27 families in the Pathways program are selected based upon their desire and motivation to attain self-sufficiency. Families live in the “New Heights” Residential Community affordable housing units. To be selected as a part of the program, families must be committed to becoming vocationally, educationally, and personally self-sufficient with healthy lifestyles in a one to three-year period of time. The September meeting featured a stir-fry vegetable demonstration by Nobuko in which participants helped with the food preparation. Families learn that preparing low-fat meals can be quick and easy, eating a low fat in fat and cholesterol is one way to protect yourself against heart diseases, and that vegetables are an important source of vitamins A & C. Participants enjoyed learning how to integrate a variety of healthy foods into their diets by playing the Pyramid Power Game. The children learned some of the same concepts as they prepared a nutritious snack, participated in a pyramid flannel board activity, and enjoyed listening to a book which emphasized eating healthy foods.

Each family has developed self-sufficiency plans which are reviewed quarterly at resource team meetings which include the family and all the agencies they work with. The NEP staff have gained valuable insights about the benefits of taking a holistic approach as families make positive life changes. NEP families face many challenges beyond nutrition. It is critical that other agencies address issues which we are not able to address. The LMEF Pathways program has been an excellent partner in reaching our common goal of keeping families healthy. The families are eager learners who are working hard to achieve self-sufficiency. It is time efficient for the NEP staff since all of the families are located at the New Heights Residential Community. LMEF provides food demonstration supplies, child care for children during group meetings and excellent staff support. (MB)

Take the guesswork out of roasting a turkey

It’s getting to be turkey time again. If you’re in charge of fixing the turkey this year, check out these directions from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) NOW! Assure that you plan adequate time for buying, thawing and preparing your turkey as you plan for activities over the Thanksgiving weekend. If you have questions about safe turkey preparation, you can call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (1-800-535-4555) from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Central Standard Time.

BUYING A TURKEY
• Frozen: Allow 1 lb. per person. Buy anytime, but keep frozen until ready to thaw. (See thawing)
• Frozen Pre-Stuffed: Allow 1-1/4 lbs. per person. Buy any time. Keep frozen until ready to cook. DO NOT THAW! • Fresh: 1 lb. per person. Buy 1 to 2 days before cooking. Do not buy pre-stuffed.

THAWING A TURKEY
Thawing Time in the Refrigerator (40°F)

Approximately 24 hours per
5 pounds (Whole Turkey) 8-12 lbs. ............... 1 to 2 days 12-16 lbs. ......... 2 to 3 days
16-20 lbs. ........... 3 to 4 days 20-24 lbs. ............. 4 to 5 days

continued on page 11

NUTRITION FACTS
NUTRIFACS offers fast, convenient, accessible information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the Lincoln area call 441- 7188, for the rest of Nebraska 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

327 Avoid Time/ Temperature Danger Zone
335 Thawing a Turkey
336 Traveling Safely with Food and many more...

Food & Fitness

Focus
on Food

Alice Henneman, RD, LDN Extension Educator

Q: Is it safe to eat rice that has been left setting overnight?
A: Rice that has been held at room temperature for more than a couple of hours can be a source of foodborne illness from Bacillus cereus. Symptoms include vomiting and diarrhea and usually last six to 24 hours. Treat cooked rice as you would a cooked meat product, recommends Pat Kendall, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension. Refrigerate leftovers promptly in shallow containers to encourage rapid cooling. If you’re cooking rice for use later in fried rice, refrigerate the cooked rice in shallow containers within one hour of preparation, advises Kendall. Keep cooked rice refrigerated until ready to stir-fry. Once prepared, keep fried rice hot (above 140 degrees F) until ready to serve.

Q: Is it necessary to refrigerate pumpkin pie after it’s been baked?
A: Yes. Foods made with eggs and milk such as pumpkin or custard pies and cheesecake must first be safely baked until they reach an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees F. At this temperature, a knife inserted in the center will come out clean. Then, they must be refrigerated after baking. Eggs and milk have high protein and moisture contents and when these baked products are left at room temperature, conditions are ripe for bacteria to multiply. (AH)

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Making character count in your family

If we really want young people to develop integrity, compassion and perseverance, we must go beyond what is taught in classrooms. Using the principles of CHARACTER COUNTS! in our families is a good way to start. The T.A.M.E. approach may help:

TEACH: Teach kids their character counts—that their success and happiness will depend on how well they live. Be their role models. Tell them that people of character know the difference between right and wrong because they guide their actions by the Six Pillars of Character. Use examples of children and adults in your world to help children see how character plays in their own life, history and the news.

ADVOCATE: Encourage your teens to live up to the Six Pillars of Character in all their thoughts and actions. Don’t be neutral about the importance of character and values; be active and involved about proper conduct. Be clear and uncompromising that you want and expect your children to be trustworthy, respectful and responsible.

MODEL: Be careful and self-conscious about setting a good example in what you say and do. Hold yourself to the highest standards by honoring the Six Pillars of Character at all times. Be sure your messages reinforce your lessons about doing the right thing. When you slip (and most of us do), act the way you want your kids to behave when they act improperly.

ENFORCE: Instill the Six Pillars by rewarding good behavior and by discouraging all instances of bad behavior, by imposing fair, consistent consequences. For example, ask each member of your family to choose one of the Six Pillars. Have them describe an incident of how someone they know has demonstrated that pillar to them. Some questions to ask: How did it make you feel when this happened? Were you more willing to act this way in return? Did you consider doing the same thing for someone else? How might you act differently?

Holiday toy buying
Over 2.6 billion toys are purchased each year and the holidays contribute in a large way to that total. As we approach this “toy” season, keep in mind the following suggestions from the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Consider your environment and ages of other, particularly younger, children in the family. A toy intended for an older child may be unsuitable or dangerous in the hands of a younger child.

Be especially careful when selecting toys for children under the age of three. Avoid toys with parts that could be swallowed or inhaled, including small balls and uninflated balloons, and those with sharp points or rough edges. Make sure that soft rattles, squeakers and teething toys, even in their most compressed state, are too large to fit completely in an infant’s mouth.

No matter how old a child, if he or she is still mouthing objects, be sure toys or pieces of toys are too large to swallow or become lodged in the mouth or throat.

Check for sturdy, well-sewn seams on stuffed animals and cloth dolls. Be certain that eyes, noses, buttons, ribbons and other decorations are securely fastened and cannot be pulled or bitten off.

Choose electronic toys with heating elements only for children over the age of eight and instruct them to play with those toys only when there is adult supervision.

Be certain that arrows and darts used by children have blunt tips such as rubber or flexible plastic tips, cork or other protective points. Check to see that tips are attached securely.

Look for the words “machine/surface washable” on stuffed and cloth toys and “UL (Underwriters Laboratories) Approved” on electrical toys.

Purchase a toy storage chest that has a removable lid or a spring-loaded lid to prevent pinched fingers. Check for features of a toy that ensure a safe play environment.

Remember, each child is unique and develops at his or her own pace. The best thing adults can do when purchasing toys is to know the maturity, skill level and interests of the child, read the age labels carefully and use them as guides. Above all, use common sense.

Teens under stress
Youth under stress may show one or more of the following symptoms:

• Disorganization: Teens may have trouble completing assignments on time and following directions.

• Lack of interest in self and others: They may appear preoccupied. Particularly in older children and teens, tears in public may be a sign of inability to cope with problems.

• Isolation in behavior: Careful children become reckless; pleasant children become abrasive; shy children withdraw from friends.

• Violence: The teen is anger management, destructive or verbally abusive.

• Regression: Behavior may change drastically, weight change, up or down, often accompanies depression in both

children and adults.

• Fear: The teen may become afraid of many things and may not want to participate in any activity involving risk taking.

• Fatigue: The teen may not be getting adequate sleep due to turmoil. Fatigue is also a common symptom of depression.

• If you notice signs of stress in your teen, talk to him or her, help problem solve those things causing stress. Seek counseling if the problem persists or seems too complicated for you to resolve.

LJ

Salad Luncheon/Fashion Show
Want to see the latest fashions? If so, join the FCE Council for a Salad Luncheon/Fashion Show at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, November 8 at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center. Tickets are $5 and available from FCE club members or the Extension office through November 3. Everyone is invited to attend. (LB)

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LJ
**Attention! 4-H Cat Project Members!**

*We’re starting a county cat club!*

Attend an organizational meeting **Thursday, November 13, 1997 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln

Catherine Langdon, D.V.M. A-4 Animal Hospital
will teach you how to care for your cat.

**Looks like a good time!**

*Please come!*

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**Holiday gifts needed**

There is always a need for helping the less fortunate, especially around the holiday season. Lincoln Public School Headstart Program is in need of over 300 gifts for 3 and 4 year old children. New, handmade or purchased items such as books, stuffed toys, dolls, cars, trucks, markers, puzzles, etc., are needed.

If gifts are wrapped, please indicate what the item is, the cost ($3-$4 recommended) and if the gift is for a boy or girl. Bring gifts to the Extension office by December 1.

For more information, contact Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator, 441-7180. This is an excellent community service program for 4-H, FCE and other community clubs. Individuals may also participate. (LB)

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**Teen Council help**

Do you have questions about 4-H projects or subject matter? Do you need some help with demonstrations, judging and other 4-H events and activities? The 4-H Teen Council and 4-HAmbassadors would like to help you. These teenage youth have been involved in 4-H for a number of years and through their 4-H experiences, have gained valuable knowledge that they would like to share with others. If you would like to have a Teen Council member or Ambassador come to your 4-H meeting, call the Extension office and we will help you make arrangements. (TK)

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**4-H & Youth**

- The Production Livestock Booster Club will meet Tuesday, November 4, 7:30 p.m. New board members will be welcomed. (DL)
- Teen Council will meet Sunday, November 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m. All teens are encouraged to attend. (DL)
- Horse VIPS meeting Wednesday, November 12, 7:00 p.m. (LB)
- Rabbit VIPS meeting Thursday, November 20, 7:00 p.m. (LB)
- 4-H Ambassadors, Monday, November 24, 7:00 p.m. (LB)

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**Focus on 4-H**

This month we will look at the 4-H sheep project. Did you know that in this project you can learn to communicate with others, make decisions along with increasing your knowledge and skills in the sheep area? To enroll in the sheep project you don’t have to live on a farm or even own an animal. If you want to learn more about the 4-H sheep project, call the Extension office at 441-7180 or check out the 4-H sheep manual entitled “Lambs, Rams and You”.

To have fun and learn about sheep body parts let’s do one of the activities found in “Lambs, Rams and You”. Focus in next month for another project outlook! (DL)

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**Sheep Body Parts**

- back
- belly
- breast or brisket
- dewclaw
- dewlap
- dock
- ear
- eye
- face
- foot
- forearm
- foreflank
- florehead
- hip
- hock
- knee
- leg of lamb
- loin
- mouth
- meck
- pastern
- poll
- rear flank
- ribs
- rump
- Shank
- shoulder
- stifle
- thigh
- twist

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**Shooting sports meeting**

Youth and parents interested in shooting sports are invited to the reorganizational meeting of the Lancaster County Shooting Sports 4-H Club Monday, November 10 at 7:00 P.M.

Shooting sports disciplines offered through 4-H include air rifle (BB and pellet), archery, shotgun (trapshooting), small bore rifle and pellet pistol. All 4-H instructors are specially certified through the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension to focus on teaching safe and responsible use of firearm and archery equipment.

Each discipline holds practice sessions throughout the year. Youth may participate in more than one area.

If you enjoy shooting sports or would like to learn more about them, this is the club to join. New members are welcome. For additional information, call Lorene at 441-7180. (LB)
4-H...hidden happiness

4-H emphasizes learning by doing. The term “4-H” refers to head, heart, hands and health. Around these four words, symbolized in the emblem, are the educational objectives of the 4-H program. Head to clearer thinking, heart to greater loyalty, hands to larger service, health to better living.

The national 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter “H” placed parallel to the midrib of each leaf. The H’s stand for head, heart, hands and health. The four-leaf clover signifies good luck and advancement.

Find seven four-leaf clovers in addition to the large clover in the middle. (LB)

Lancaster County born and raised beef

November is coming, crisp air, jackets and picking out the perfect show steer or heifer. As you pick out those special animals, keep in mind the special award our county gives each year to promote Lancaster County beef—the Lancaster County Born and Raised Beef Award.

The Lancaster County Born and Raising contest is open to all market steers and heifers born and raised in Lancaster County. This calf can be one from your own herd or one you bought from someone else as long as the breeder is located in Lancaster County.

Attention all interested 4-H members participating in 4-H for their outstanding achievements in 4-H! (DL)

Horse Bits

Congratulations to all 4-H members who participated in 4-H events at county fair, state fair and Ak-Sar-Ben. Good luck in the next year of 4-H work.

Thanks to all the parents and volunteers who helped make all these events educational and successful.

Fall is great for trail rides. Many clubs have taken rides through Pioneers Park and other areas. Trail rides are a fun event that can include families.

Don’t forget to immunize your horses this fall! Worming is also important. Keep your schedule for worming your horses up to date.

4-H members participating in Ak-Sar-Ben were Ashley Branting, Jannel Colton, Amy Countryman, Kassie Hollman, Kellie Hollman, Ryan Ehrlich, Jeremiah Frink, Jessica Frink, Holly Ehrlich, Hadley Richters, Katherine Salsrand, Nicole Steinhauser, Jason Wise, Kim Zalewski, Amy Ryan, Kyle Ryan, Jennifer Ronhovde, Lindsay Schoneweis and Alicia Ronhovde. (LB)

Attention all interested 4-H horse project members who would like to increase their knowledge of all aspects of the horse industry. Monthly meetings are planned to assist with information needed to pass level tests, along with forming Hippology and Horse Bowl teams from Lancaster County. The prime objective will be to develop horse knowledge among 4-H members, 8–18 years of age. Call Brenda Messick at 785-7005 if you are interested in attending the first meeting Wednesday, November 12 at 7:00 p.m. (LB)

The Happy Go Lucky 4-H Club was recently awarded the Governor’s Agricultural Excellence Award. This $1000 cash donation was awarded to only 30 outstanding 4-H clubs from around Nebraska. To receive this award, the club had to fill out an application to prove their efforts in agriculture and in their communities. The award money will be used to promote 4-H and agriculture.

Congratulations to the Happy Go Lucky 4-H Club for their outstanding achievements in 4-H! (DL)

Kudos Corner

The Happy Go Lucky 4-H Club had a head start on celebrating Character Counts! week when they participated in the 1997 Nebraska Equestrian Special Olympics.

These 4-H club members were up at dawn readying their horses and trailering them to the fairgrounds. The horses were the donated mounts upon which some of these special Olympic athletes participated. Club members helped in the ring as spotters and horse handlers.

Many pillars of good character were exhibited by the athletes in the smiles and joy they displayed whether they won or not. We all learned a lot about respect for all people, responsibility for jobs carried out, caring for our animals and for our horses and trustworthiness in finishing a task. We are all citizens of this planet and although life is not always fair, we learned we can help make it more so.

by Deb Stephens, 4-H parent

4-H Achievement Activities - what’s it all about?

4-H members will be recognized for their achievements Tuesday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m. County awards, Outstanding 4-H Member, I Dare You and Meritorious Service awards will be presented. There will also be presentations and displays of activities that take place throughout the year. Come see a demonstration, dance and song groups, judging, speeches and more!

This is an opportunity for all clubs, new or established, to see what opportunities 4-H has to offer and how members, leaders and parents can participate.

Come join the 4-H Council in recognizing 4-H members for a job well done. (LB)

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Page 9

L to R: Anthony Nisely, Ron Dowding, Jana Dowding, Melanie Nisely and Governor Ben Nelson

Left to right: Ashley Fairfield, Ann Kemper, Mary Kemper (sitting), Natalie Kovar, Michaela Stephens Horses: Robin & Joko

Not pictured: Mali Dyck, Leigh Ann Harns, Celeste Kovar and horses Whiz; Dandy, E.T., Sam and Honey

The Lancaster County Born and Raised Beef Award.

Congratulations to Cassandra Jensen for winning the Jonathan Milligan Backes Memorial Award for outstanding sportsmanship in the 4-H dog program. (DL)
E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues

A cooperative project of The Cooper Foundation and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The E. N. Thompson Forum on World Issues offers thought provoking speakers on issues close to our changing world. Through this effort, it is hoped that Nebraskans will increase their understanding of people from other countries and the challenges that we all face.

All lectures are free of charge at the Lied Center in Lincoln. This affords community residents a great opportunity to hear from speakers with exceptional backgrounds and experiences.

Upcoming lectures are as follows:
Wednesday, November 12, 3:30 p.m.
Thomas E. Gouttierre, Dean, International Studies and Programs at the University of Nebraska—Omaha—“Drugs, Thugs and U.S. Interests on the Historic Silk and Spice Roads: The legendary Silk and Spice Roads spanned Central and South Asia and brought ideas, riches, and exotic spices from East to West in ancient and medieval times. Today, the new countries that were the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union are struggling to build nations and democratization; age-old issues threaten to rip India and Pakistan apart internally and to pit one against the other in yet another war.

Conflict in Afghanistan continues, further menacing the stability in both regions and the world.
Composing these problems, the fabled Silk and Spice Roads of old are today among the main arteries for the exportation of terrorism and drugs.
Gouttierre explores how these issues affect contemporary interests of Nebraska and the United States.

Gouttierre has made numerous presentations on aspects of the war in Afghanistan, on U.S.-Pakistan relations and on human rights in hearings before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations. He served on the United States Peacekeeping Mission to Afghanistan as Senior Political Affairs Officer, and as the American specialist on Afghani- stan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the meetings of the U.S.-Russian Task Force on Regional Con- flicts.

Wednesday, March 4, 1998, 3:30 p.m.
Richard Burkholder Jr., Vice President and Director of International Operations, Survey Research, The Gallup Organization—“The Mind of the Chinese Consumer: Polling the World’s Most Populous Nation”
Thursday, April 9, 1998, 3:30 p.m.
ヘッドリック・スミス, プライズ・ウィナー・ニューヨーク・タイムズ・コレスポンデント, “Russia’s Rocky Road to Freedom” (GB)

November 15th is America Recycles Day

Governor Ben Nelson has proclaimed November 15 as America Recycles Day. Antici- pated as an ongoing annual event, the first America Recycles Day will have Vice President Al Gore serving as the national honorary chair and Diane Nelson as Nebraska’s honorary chair.

This year’s theme is “Keep Recycling Working: Buy Re- cycled.” The theme is based on the goal of America Recycles Day, which is to build consumer demand for recycled products and to educate all Americans about the environment and economic benefits of recycling.

The goal will be to make consumers aware of the impor- tance of “buying recycled” and to emphasize the message that you’re not usually recycling until you “buy recycled”.

The average American throws away more than four pounds of garbage every day, which adds up to about 208 million tons of waste per year. In the past ten years the recycling rate has increased from 11 percent to 27 percent. Recycling saves energy, resources and landfill space. But to keep recycling working, we need to buy products made from the materials we already recycled.

Ten Great Ways to Celebrate America Recycles Day
1. Commit to “buy recycled” at home and at work.
2. Think before you buy. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
3. Start a paper recycling program in your office, school or community.
4. Ask your local recycling coordinator about adding steel, glass or plastic to your community’s recycling program.
5. Tell your local retailer you want them to stock more prod- ucts made from recycled mate- rial.
6. Encourage the use of recycled content products in your business.
7. Leave grass clippings on the lawn as fertilizer.
8. Start a compost pile with yard trimmings and food scraps.
9. Take children to visit a recycling facility or a landfill in your community.
10. Recycle your used motor oil or oil filters at an approved collection center, and buy re- refined oil for your next oil change.

For more information, visit this web site: www.americarecyclday.org

COALITION ON RECY- CLING IN NEBRASKA
• Department of Economic Development
• Department of Environmental Quality
• Keep Nebraska Beautiful
• Nebraska State Recycling Association
• University of Nebraska- Lincoln
• Cooperative Extension Nebraska State Department of Administrative Services
• Solid Waste Association of North America-Neb- raska Chapter

America Recycles Day is November 15. (GB)
Seven highly effective habits for holiday food safety
continued from front page

When roasting meat and poultry, use an oven temperature no lower than 325 degrees F. Cook ground meats (beef, veal, lamb and pork) to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F, and ground poultry to 165 degrees F. Steaks and roasts cooked to an internal temperature of 145 degrees F are medium rare, 160 degrees F medium, and 170 degrees F are well done.

For doneness, poultry breast meat should be cooked to an internal temperature of 170 degrees F. 180 degrees F for whole birds. Use a meat thermometer to assure that meat and poultry have reached a safe internal temperature.

When you cut into thoroughly cooked meat, there should be no trace of blood in the juices. When poultry is pierced with a fork, the juices should be clear, not pink.

If raw meat and poultry have been mishandled (left in the “Danger Zone” too long, see Habit 1), bacteria may grow and produce heat-resistant toxins that can cause food-borne illness. WARNING: If meat and poultry are mishandled when raw, they may not be safe to eat even after proper cooking.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!
Remember this phrase whenever you have a question about food safety and are unsure if the seven safe food habits have been followed.

Many bacteria that commonly cause food-borne illness can’t be seen, smelled or tasted. A food-borne illness may develop within 1/2 hour to a few days; some may occur as long as two or more weeks after eating a contaminated food. Remember, WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

For a reproduction-ready copy of this article for distribution to others, call Alice Henneman at 441-7180.

Recycled content building

Buildings with recycled materials a sound business practice
continued from page 7

For faster thawing, place food in a leakproof plastic bag and immerse the bag in cold water. Change the water about every 30 minutes to be sure it stays cold. After thawing, refrigerate the food until it’s ready to use. Food thaws in cold water at the rate of approximately one pound per hour. If food is thawed in the microwave, cook it right away. Unlike frozen food thawed in a refrigerator, microwave-thawed foods reach temperatures that encourage bacterial growth. Cook immediately to kill any bacteria that may have developed and to prevent further bacterial growth.

HABIT 5: MORE THAN TWO IS BAD FOR YOU

Never leave perishable food at room temperature over two hours. Perishable foods include raw and cooked meat, poultry and seafood products. Once fruits and vegetables are cut, it is safest to limit their time at room temperature.

If perishable food is left at room temperature for over two hours, bacteria can grow to harmful levels and the food may no longer be safe. The two hour limit includes preparation time as well as serving time.

On a hot day with temperatures at 90 degrees F or warmer, your “safe use time” decreases to one hour.

HABIT 6: DON’T GET SICK, COOL IT QUICK

One of the most common causes of food-borne illness is improper cooling of cooked foods. Remember—bacteria are everywhere. Even after food is cooked to a safe internal temperature, bacteria can be reintroduced to food from sources and then can reproduce.

Put leftovers in the refrigerator to cool promptly after eating. As Habit 5 stresses, refrigerate perishable food within two hours. Put foods in shallow containers so they cool faster.

For thicker foods—such as steaks, hot puddings and layers of meat slices—limit food depth to 2 inches.

When you cut into thoroughly cooked meat, there should be no trace of blood in the juices. When poultry is pierced with a fork, the juices should be clear, not pink.

If raw meat and poultry have been mishandled (left in the “Danger Zone” too long, see Habit 1), bacteria may grow and produce heat-resistant toxins that can cause food-borne illness. WARNING: If meat and poultry are mishandled when raw, they may not be safe to eat even after proper cooking.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!
Remember this phrase whenever you have a question about food safety and are unsure if the seven safe food habits have been followed.

Many bacteria that commonly cause food-borne illness can’t be seen, smelled or tasted. A food-borne illness may develop within 1/2 hour to a few days; some may occur as long as two or more weeks after eating a contaminated food.

But, I tasted it and it was OK” you may say. Be aware that people have different tolerance levels for bacteria. The very young, older people and people who are already ill may be more susceptible to a food-borne illness. Always remember, WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

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Plants have many roles

America unbugged: continued from page 3

More men than women report they would return a bug invading their house to nature (24% vs. 15%).

More men than women would rather visit in-laws than touch a bug (20% vs. 12%). Bug at first sight

A majority (65%) of Americans have a similar response when they first see a bug in their house—they catch it, kill it and make sure it is dead.

Younger respondents (aged 18-24) are less likely to catch a bug and kill it than older respondents (aged 65+) (54% vs. 79%).

Killing a bug at first sight is the most common reaction in the North Central states (74%) and less likely in the Northeast (59%) or West (53%).

Bug beliefs

Americans are more afraid of bees and wasps (34%) than of spiders (25%), ticks (13%) or centipedes (8%).

Spiders are more feared by Southerners than Northeasters (31% vs. 17%).

More than half of all Americans say they would be uncomfortable if a guest spotted fleas (4%), ticks or termites (2%) in their home.

November 4

Production Livestock Booster Club Meeting 7:30 p.m.

November 8

Salad Luncheon/Fashion Show
- sponsored by FCE Club Council 11:30 a.m.

November 9

4-H Teen Council Meeting 3:00-5:00 p.m.

November 10

Lancaster County 4-H Shooting Sports Club 7:00 p.m.

November 12

Horse VIPS Meeting 7:00 p.m.

November 20

Rabbit VIPS Meeting 7:00 p.m.

November 24

4-H Ambassadors Meeting 7:00 p.m.